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Oedipus Rex

Sophocles

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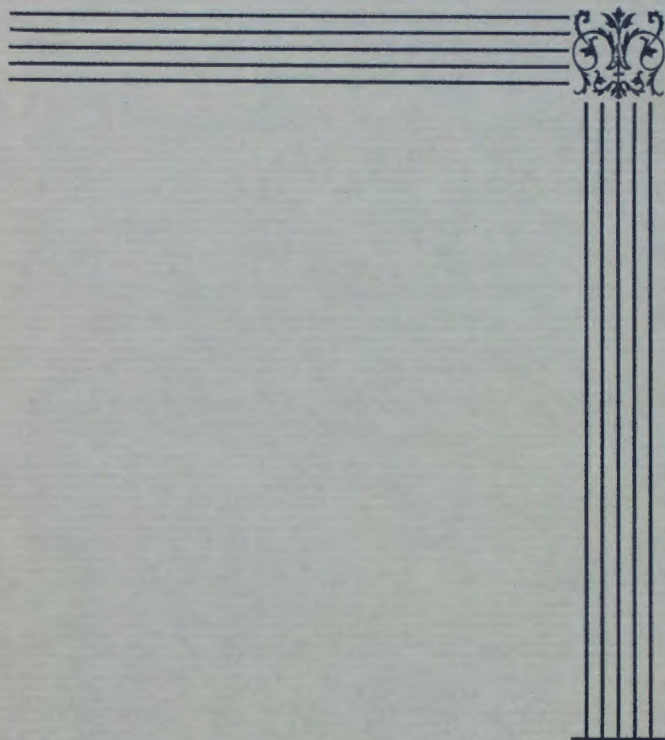
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John Carroll University Theatre

LEONE MARINELLO
Director



presents

Oedipus Rex

by Sophocles

NOVEMBER 10 and 11, 1956

8:30 P.M.

About the Play



"Tragedy is consummated when the dream of innocence is confronted with the fact of guilt and acquiesces therein." — Fiedler

There can be little doubt that **Oedipus Rex** is a crucial instance of tragedy. It is the play which best exemplifies the art of drama in its essential nature and completeness. It has this unique position partly because Aristotle based his definitions on it. However, since the time of Aristotle this play has been imitated, rewritten, discussed and produced by many generations. It has been the source of keen interest to actors, dramatists, moralists, psychologists and other students of human nature. Within the past few years Laurence Olivier has hit the peak of his acting career in **Oedipus**. He and the Greek National Theater Actors have made this play a hit in the capitols of the world. Many modern critics have pronounced Olivier's production of Oedipus their greatest artistic experience in the theater. **Oedipus Rex** by Sophocles therefore is very much in place on the stage of John Carroll University where the finest of Liberal Arts should find encouragement.

The outline of the plot will do nothing more than indicate by its dryness the genius is a dramatist. However, in a play in which the background details are far removed from our everyday life, it will be a benefit to indicate the line of action.

When Sophocles came to write his play, he had the myth of Oedipus to start with. His audience was familiar with the age-old story. Laius and Jocasta, King and Queen of Thebes, are told by the oracle that their son will grow up to kill his father and marry his mother. In order to avoid this occurrence they pierce and bind the feet of their young son and leave him on Mount Kitharon to die. However the boy is found by a shepherd who later gives him to the King and Queen of Corinth who raise him as their own. But Oedipus—"Clubfoot"—is plagued by the oracle. He hears that he is fated to kill his father and marry his mother. To escape this fate, he flees from Corinth and on his journey meets an old man. In a dispute on the road, he kills the old man who really is his father. Oedipus comes to Thebes at a time when the Sphinx is preying on the city. He solves the riddle of the Sphinx and saves the city for which he is made king. He marries the widowed Queen. Later, when a drought settles on

Thebes, the King finds that the gods are displeased that the slayer of Laius has not been punished. Oedipus swears to find the slayer; he discovers that he himself is the culprit and that he has married Jocasta, his mother. He blinds himself so that his error will no longer be seen and goes into exile. A ruined man, he dies at last in Athens.

It is obvious even from this sketch that the myth has more narrative material than **Gone With the Wind**. In his play **Oedipus Rex** Sophocles begins almost at the end of the story. It opens with the plague descending on the city of Thebes after Oedipus and Jocasta have been ruling with great success for many years. The play takes less than a day and consists of Oedipus' quest for Laius' slayer, his painful recognition of himself as culprit, husband of his own mother and his complete trammelling in the mesh of fate.

The chorus in this Greek play is somewhat unfamiliar to modern audiences. It is not just a mob of random citizens, but it plays an essential role in the drama. It represents the point of view and faith of Thebes as a whole, rather closer to being the conscience of the race than an overheated mob. It holds the balance between Oedipus and his antagonists, marks the progress of the struggle, and restates the main theme throughout.

Concerning the main theme, many are the attempts to rationalize this play. Among them is the psychological theory of Freud and his "son-loving-mother" complex which has come into common parlance today as the "Oedipus Complex".

However, considering this play from a completely human point of view, we find in it the tragic lot of great men, caught on the wheel of fortune, the "dream of innocence confronted by the fact of guilt". In the spectacle of another's errors and fate, in the shock and blows of circumstance we see the doubtful doom of human kind created sick, commanded to be sound. Here we find tragedy that is concerned more with man against God than man against man; here the attempt to make the heavens more just in contrast to naturalistic drama from Ibsen on down. It provides for the greatness, the emancipation of the spirit which makes man's suffering meaningful and worthwhile, and generates terror.

H. S. HUGHES, S.J.



The Characters

(In the order in which they speak)



Oedipus, King of Thebes	John Sillings
Priest of Zeus	Ronald Kondrat
Creon, Brother-In-Law of Oedipus	David Davies
Tiresias, The Blind Prophet	Robert Showiak
Tiresias' Attendant	Gerry Marinello
Jocasta, Wife of Oedipus	Eleanor Duray
Messenger from Corinth	Robert Maynard
A Shepherd, formerly in Laius' service	Richard Murphy
Captain of Oedipus' Guards	John McBride
Antigone, Daughter of Oedipus	Patsie Marinello
Ismene, Daughter of Oedipus	Kathy Maynard
Chorus of Theban Men	John Clifford, John Hanson, Roger Hurley, Thomas Brophy
Chorus of Theban Women	Patricia Krause, Joyce Grande, Carol Armstrong
First Soldier	Peter Wuerpel
Second Soldier	Sam Lavelle

Scene Sequence

The action takes place in Thebes, before the Palace of Oedipus

PROLOGUE: Oedipus, Priest, Creon

Parodus: "Prayer to Many Gods" — Chorus

EPISODE I: Oedipus, Tiresias

Ode: "Nemesis" — Chorus

EPISODE II: Creon, Oedipus, Jocasta

Intermission — 15 minutes

Ode: "Man" — Chorus

EPISODE III: Jocasta, Messenger, Oedipus, Shepherd

Ode: "Life is Sorrow" — Chorus

EXODOS: Captain, Oedipus, Creon, Antigone, Ismene

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Michael Grogan
James Huber
Pete O'Hara
Pat Chicone
Lois Lackner
Joanne Artress
Patt Kendra
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Anne Mandel
Jeanne Oskey
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John Disk
John McFewe

Mary Jo Grane
Nancy Knectes
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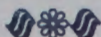
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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